God's Household Manager: Reading the Pastoral Epistles in Light of Philodemus

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Abstract: A common reading of the Pastoral Epistles (PE) is that they seek to inculcate Greco-Roman patriarchal values as normative for the church. A comparative reading of the PE with Philodemus, On Household Management will test that theory. According to the PE, an ideal bishop is “God’s household manager” (Titus 1:7) and “presides well over his own house” (1 Tim 3:4-5). Would a Christian overseer make a good Epicurean household manager? Would Philodemus’s ideal household manager make a good Christian overseer? These questions can help sharpen our understanding of how Greco-Roman social values function in the PE.

One of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 18th century was the ancient city of Herculaneum that was buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 and all but forgotten until well diggers hit upon some marble statues in 1709.1 In 1750, explorers found a marble floor and soon traced the contours of an enormous villa that contained, in addition to its lavish mosaics and statuary, the charred remains of a library of hundreds papyrus rolls. The villa has been thought to

1 David Sider, The Library of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), describes the discovery of the Villa of the Papyri and the enormous challenges and gradual development over three centuries of methods to open and read the scrolls.
be that of Lucius Calpurnius Piso, a wealthy politician, poet and patron of the arts. The library turned out to be that of the poet and Epicurean philosopher Philodemus of Gadara, who lived in the first half of the first century BCE (ca. 110 – ca. 40).

Among Philodemus’s extensive writings was a multi-volume work on virtues that included a treatise *On Household Management*. Philodemus represents one chapter in a philosophical tradition of discussing household management that ran from Xenophon to the Islamic period.

1. *Establishing a valid comparison*. Our first task is to establish that there is a valid basis for comparing Philodemus, *On Household Management* with the PE. Paul Robertson has argued that, “in form, content, and social purpose [the essays of Philodemus] line up quite closely with Paul’s letters and Epictetus’ *Discourses*.“ He lists the following “significant similarities”:

1) plain-spoken delivery with simple rhetorical devices such as examples and metaphors;
2) promoting wider, abstract cosmological-religious claims;
3) evaluating rivals on the basis of those claims, in order to attract and retain followers;
4) influencing behavior within the context of those claims;
5) constructing groupness around both belief and behavior; and

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2 Piso was consul of Rome in 58 BCE, and son-in-law of Julius Caesar.
6) asserting authority based on specialized knowledge and ethical example.\(^6\)

But Robertson does not include the PE in his study and gives little attention to *On Household Management*. So, even if we grant Robertson’s observations about the general comparison between Paul and Philodemus, we must still justify the specific comparison between the PE and *On Household Management*.

While the PE certainly belong within a Pauline corpus, they manifest enough peculiarities of style and emphasis to make them the most disputed of the disputed Paulines. Nevertheless, the PE exhibit all the qualities in Robertson’s list, with the possible exception of point 3. That is, Pastoral Paul does not evaluate rivals so much on the basis of their adherence to abstract cosmological-religious claims as on their ethical misconduct. His rivals are Christians, and his criticisms of their doctrines amount to vague, ambiguous statements about marriage, diet, and realized eschatology. But he makes no indication that the rivals reject what he sees as the foundational doctrine of monotheism or the messiah-ship of Jesus. Instead, he hammers them for unethical behavior, which is consistent with Robertson’s point 3 on retaining followers and his point 4 on influencing behavior.

On the other hand, Robertson’s points 2 and 4 fairly describe Philodemus’s aims in this treatise. For example, from one fragmentary passage it seems that one function of good household management is to cultivate moral excellence (καλοκαγαθία).\(^7\) In more certain passages, Philodemus indicates his interest “in philosophical household management” (εἰς τὴν φιλόσοφον οἰκονομίαν, 2.10), and he ponders with approval the possibility that a household

\(^6\) Robertson, *New Taxonomy*, 76.

\(^7\) καλοκαγαθία is a conjectural restoration at 5.19; but cf. Xenophon, *Oec.* 7.2, 43 and Tsouna, *Philodemus*, On Property Management, 85, n. 17.
manager could teach his foreman to make others just (7.21-24). He believes good household management involves cultivating behavior that reflects the values of the Epicurean system.

Even so, Robertson focuses on the essays On Piety and On Death, which “seem to be completed, fully-polished texts.” He avoids On Household Management in part because it is so fragmentary and also because it, “narrows its groupness and ethics to philosophers, asking now they should support themselves financially, a clear conceptual parallel with parts of Paul’s own thought (e.g., 1 Cor. 9).” I suggest, however, that this narrowing of groupness to focus on the professional philosophers offers a good parallel to the PE, if, as I have argued elsewhere, we read the PE as an epistolary handbook for youthful ministers. In a similar way, as Tsouna points out, Philodemus writes not for the general public but specifically to show, “the ways in which people who desire to live the philosophical life can engage in property management without compromising their ethical principles and without endangering their happiness.”

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8 Philodemus here conflates two points from Xenophon, who discusses how to teach an ἐπίτροπος to rule others (Oec. 13.4-12) and also how to be just, which he reduces to being attentive to tasks and not stealing (Oec. 14.1-10), but Xenophon does not discuss how to teach the ἐπίτροπος to teach other slaves to be just.

9 Robertson, New Taxonomy, 75.

10 Robertson, New Taxonomy, 76.


Scholars have found fertile ground for comparison between Philodemus, Oec. and 1 Timothy 6.\(^\text{13}\) Philodemus’s Epicurean perspective on the proper acquisition and use of wealth over against Cynic mendicancy sheds light on how Pastoral Paul envisions a community who share their wealth with one another over against Jesus’ call for disciples to sell everything (Mark 10:21//Matt 19:21//Luke 18:22) and to go out without provisions (Matt 10:9-10//Luke 10:3-4). So, if Philodemus sheds any light on how Pastoral Paul thought about management of literal wealth, we have reason to think he might also illuminate how Pastoral Paul thought about the management of God’s metaphorical household.

Still, regarding our question as to how the ideal Epicurean household manager compares with the ideal Christian overseer, Philodemus does not quite align with the PE. That is, in the PE, the “household” belongs to God (1 Tim 3:15), and the ἐπίσκοπος is “God’s household manager” (Titus 1:7). For Pastoral Paul, the overseer may well “preside” over his own household (1 Tim 3:4), but in God’s household, he functions like a foreman (Gk. ἐπίτροπος; Lat. vilicus), a trusted slave who manages on behalf of the owner. On this point, the more apt comparison would be to

Xenophon, *Household Manager*, in which the estate owner Isomachus explains to Socrates the qualities he seeks and those he avoids in selecting a good foreman (ἐπίτροπος).\(^\text{14}\)

According to Philodemus, the good οἰκονόμος appoints an ἐπίτροπος.\(^\text{15}\) And because he avoids even “moderate worry and toil” (μέτρον τι φροντίδος καὶ πόνου, 19.20-21), he thinks it a good idea to have some servant (ὑπερέτης, 19.25) to worry over the details of his accounts, just as he hires a baker and does not bother with baking his own bread.\(^\text{16}\) But Philodemus does not list the qualities of a good ἐπίτροπος. He just advises taking references from friends (26.18-34), and he assumes the foreman will carry out the directives of the householder. His focus is on how the Epicurean philosopher can be a good οἰκονόμος of his own estate. Nevertheless, Philodemus recognizes that the same principles apply, whether one is managing his own household or that of someone else (1.5-7, 15-17), so we should not regard the shift in focus as an impediment to the present question.

We may, therefore, compare Philodemus, *Oec.* with the PE on the point of what makes for a well managed household. This essay will compare the texts from two directions. After considering Philodemus’s own social location, I shall first examine Philodemus’s view on an


\(^{15}\) Philodemus, *Oec.* 7.13, 24 (commenting on Xenophon, *Oec.* 12); 9.18 (commenting on Theophrastus; 26.20); 26.20.

\(^{16}\) In *Oec.* 17.14-40, Philodemus applies the moneymaking / bread-making analogy differently. There he argues that the technical experts can perform those tasks on a large scale, but a philosopher is capable of making enough money and/or bread for his daily needs, and that is sufficient for happiness. Of course, Philodemus found his happiness in letting someone else do menial tasks (23.5-10).
ideal οἰκονόμος and then Pastoral Paul’s ideal ἐπίσκοπος. By approaching the comparison from two directions, we should be able to tease out not only what the two authors have in common but also how they differ.

2. Philodemus’s social location. The Greek Anthology preserves a dinner invitation from Philodemus to Piso in the form of an epigram that hints at the relative wealth of the two men and the relationship between them:

Tomorrow, friend (φίλτατε) Piso, your musical comrade drags you to his modest
digs (λιτήν σε καλώδα) at three in the afternoon,
feeding you at your annual visit to the Twentieth. If you will miss udders
and Bromian wine mis en bouteille in Chios,
yet you will see faithful comrades, yet you will hear things far sweeter
than the land of the Phaeacians.
And if you ever turn your eye our way, Piso, instead of a modest
Twentieth we shall lead a richer one.17

In this epigram, Philodemus invites Piso to his house for one of the dinners that Epicureans traditionally held on the 20th of every month in memory of Epicurus.18 The promise of sharing company with “faithful comrades” suggests that Piso is an Epicurean, but “your annual visit” suggests that he was not a regular at the monthly meetings in Herculaneum. Philodemus cannot

17 Anthologia Palatina 11.44. For text and discussion, see David Sider, The Epigrams of Philodemus (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 152-159; Sider, Library, 82-83; Anja Bettenworth, “Phaeacians at the Birthday Party: A.P. 11.44 (Philodemus) and its Epic Background,” Aitia 2 (2012), online at: http://aitia.revues.org/380.
18 Diogenes Laërtius, Lives 10.18.
compete with Piso in terms of luxury. He cannot promise the fine delicacies\textsuperscript{19} that Piso usually enjoys at his own table, but he can promise tales more entertaining than those Odysseus told the Phaeacians, including the stories of the Cyclops and Circe the witch.\textsuperscript{20} Philodemus refers to his home as “modest digs,” or more literally as a “simple hut” (λιτὴ καλιάς). This is a self-deprecating acknowledgment that his house is not as opulent as the one we call the Villa of the Papyri.\textsuperscript{21} Even if Philodemus resided in relatively modest quarters, he had the space and the means to host dinner parties. From this epigram, therefore, we may infer that Philodemus followed the example of Epicurus himself. That is, he was comfortably well off, certainly not poor but not extravagantly wealthy either. That would fit nicely with the ideal οἰκονόμος in \textit{On Household Management}.

3. \textit{Philodemus on the Ideal Household Manager}. The first few columns of the scroll are highly fragmentary, although enough remains for us to see that, in columns 1-7 plus fragments 1 and 2, Philodemus critiques Xenophon’s \textit{Household Manager}. He takes up Xenophon’s phrase “to inhabit well his own house” (τὸ εὖ οἰκεῖν τὸν ἰδίον οἶκον)\textsuperscript{22} as the primary aim of οἰκονομία. He considers whether the adverb “well” (εὖ) should be understood in the narrow monetary sense

\textsuperscript{19} On udders (Plutarch, \textit{Mor.} 124f) and Chian wine (A.P. 11.34) as luxury foods, see Bettenworth, n. 2.

\textsuperscript{20} Homer, \textit{Odyssey} 9-12.

\textsuperscript{21} Sider, \textit{Epigrams}, 154, points out that a καλιάς can also refer to a shrine, “a sense equally appropriate in a poem in which a friend of the muses (μουσοφιλής, translated above as “music lover” but understandable as “beloved by the muses”) invites Piso to a near-religious occasion.”

\textsuperscript{22} Philodemus, \textit{Oec.} 1.6 (referring to Xenophon, \textit{Oec.} 1.2). The translation is from Asmis, “Epicurean Economics,” 165.
of “to acquire and preserve much wealth” (τὸ πορίζειν πολλὰ χρήματα καὶ φυλάττειν, 1.11-12) or perhaps should be taken in a “customary” (σύνηθες) sense of implying μεγάλωστὶ καὶ μακαρίως. Tsouna takes the two senses as roughly synonymous, translating μεγάλωστὶ καὶ μακαρίως as, “on a large and prosperous scale.” But Philodemus distinguishes between the two definitions, which suggests that we should not read them as synonymous. I think that in the “customary” alternative we might take the adverb “happily” (μακαρίως) to imply something broader than financial prosperity, a more general sense of well-being. The fragmentary text is difficult to follow, but Philodemus seems to hint that he would prefer a broader sense of μακαρίως would be more in keeping with a philosophically minded household manager.

23 On “customary” (συνήθης) usages of words (Oec. 1.4, 17; 4.1, 32; 5.4; 9.6; 10.30; etc.), Philodemus follows Epicurus’s preference for the “dominant meaning” (λέξις κυρία, D.L., Lives 10.13) or the “clear meaning” (φθόγγυς, D.L., Lives 10.31, 37). He criticizes Xenophon for not using words in the “customary” way, but his critique is also confusing, because he focuses on Xenophon’s metaphorical use of words like “slave,” “master,” and his relativizing of “poverty” and “wealth.” The real problem, which Philodemus does not quite grasp, is that Xenophon equivocates on the meaning of “acquisition” (κτήμα, Xenophon, Oec. 1.6). Acquiring enemies is not the same operational category as acquiring money, and so Xenophon’s dialogue bogs down in ambiguity.

24 Epicurus wrote to Menoeceus that physical health and tranquility (ἀταραξία) of mind are “the end of living happily” (τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἐστι τέλος, D.L., Lives 10.128), and again, “we say that pleasure is the beginning and end of living happily” (τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος λέγομεν εἶναι τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν, D.L., Lives 128). For a Stoic critique of this way of expressing the “end” (finis) of goods, see Cicero, Tusculan Disputations 5.26-27, and especially On Ends. On the likelihood that Cicero, On Ends, relied on Philodemus as his major source for understanding Epicureanism, see Tsouna, Ethics of Philodemus, 14, n. 3.
Indeed, the following context points in this direction, as Philodemus argues that the household manager’s function as “provider of wealth and money” (3a.8-9, τὸν κτήματον καὶ χρημάτων, trans. Tsouna) is secondary to his function to manage the household “happily” (μακαρίως, 3a.13). In column 3, he glosses μακαρίως as “to teach another more delightful things that he would not have found even if he sought them” (3a.14-16). So, consistent with Philodemus’s larger philosophical aims, it seems that teaching how to live μακαρίως is one of the ways the philosophically minded household manager “benefits” (ὠφελεῖσθαι, 3a.28) his household. I would prefer Tsouna’s rendering of this phrase in an earlier study as “vastily beneficially and happily.”

How does this compare with the Pastoral Epistles? If “managing a household well” is all about acquiring and preserving wealth, then Philodemus and Pastoral Paul have very different ideas. Pastoral Paul’s apocalyptic eschatology is sharply critical of those who are “rich in the present age” (1 Tim 6:17), and he views all hardships from the perspective of hope for a life with Christ in the age to come (2 Tim 2:11-13). Philodemus has no sense of an age to come and focuses entirely on the good life in the present age.

On the other hand, if “managing a household well” entails teaching its members to notice things they tend to overlook, so as to cultivate in them a more philosophical sense of prosperity, then Philodemus and Pastoral Paul might find some basis for conversation. Pastoral Paul values

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25 I take column 3a as coming after column 1, but the first few columns are highly fragmentary, and the original sequence of some pieces is debatable. In any case, this passage is in the near context.

26 Tsouna, Ethics of Philodemus, 169.

27 In his letter to Menoeceus, Epicurus wrote, “Death is the privation of all sentience,” and “when death comes, we are not” (D.L., Lives 10.124, 125, trans. Hicks, LCL).
the teaching function of an elder (1 Tim 5:17), and I would argue that a teaching function should be integral to the role of the overseer who “manages his own household well,” and “cares for the church of God” the way a good father cares for his children (1 Tim 3:4-5). They would have different ideas about what values and behaviors to emphasize, but Philodemus and Pastoral Paul would agree that a good household manager teaches his household a way of life, so that they will prosper, and not merely in a material sense.

In columns 7-11 plus columns A and B, Philodemus critiques the work we know as ps.-Aristotle, Household Management, which he attributes to Theophrastus. Theophrastus was a student of Aristotle who succeeded him as leader of the Lyceum. So Philodemus’s attribution is plausible, although we do not have information to confirm it. In the discussion that follows, I shall refer to the author as “Theophrastus,” following Philodemus, but I shall cite the text as it is known from the Aristotelian corpus.

Philodemus questions Theophrastus’s starting point that a wife and slaves are essential elements of a household (8.13-9.26).\(^{28}\) He argues that one can be perfectly happy without a wife and that any task that one might assign either to a foreman or a laborer could be done by a free person just as well as by a slave.\(^{29}\)

Philodemus considers Theophrastus’s division of οἰκονομία into four essential skills: the acquisition of property (τὸ κτητικόν), its preservation (τὸ φυλακτικόν), its arrangement (τὸ

\(^{28}\) Here referring to ps.-Aristotle, Oec. 2.1 (1343A); cf. Aristotle, Pol. 1.4-6 (1252AB). Both texts cite Hesiod in order to establish the fundamental necessity of wife and slaves.

\(^{29}\) Swain, Economy, Family, and Society, 212-213, brings out Philodemus’s objection to Theophrastus’s use of Hesiod much more clearly than Tsouna.
κοσμητικόν), and the proper use of it (τὸ χρηστικόν). Philodemus reduces these to three, since he views “arrangement” (διακόσμησις, 11.1) not as an essential skill but as one that adds enjoyment to proper use (10.44-11.2). Also, just as in his discussion of Xenophon, he resists any reduction of the role of household manager to being a “provider of wealth and money,” so here also he resists reducing the skills of acquisition and preservation to a mercenary calculation of what is “fruitful” or “unfruitful” (11.3-6). After all, the ideal household manager is a philosopher. Philodemus sets forth his own philosophical ideas about acquisition, preservation, and use of property in the next section, but in this discussion of Theophrastus his main concern seems to be that a household manager must maintain leisure time for study and conversation. He rejects Theophrastus’s advice that a good household manager rises before his slaves and retires after them, because a philosopher needs his rest (B.1-10). Furthermore, “a philosopher does not work” (11.16-17). The philosophical οἰκονόμος sets annual and monthly budgets and has people who administer the details and maintain the equipment (B.11-18).

Turning again to the PE, we might think that Pastoral Paul and Philodemus would have similar assessments of Theophrastus. Like Philodemus, Pastoral Paul takes slavery for granted (1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10). But nothing in the PE corresponds to Philodemus questioning the need for slaves in a household (Oec. 8.32-9.26) or advocating for humane treatment of slaves (9.26-10.28).

Like Philodemus, Pastoral Paul is not overly concerned about acquisition and preservation of wealth, and he is at ease among people who are at least comfortably well off. The households in his community may not be wealthy by Piso’s standards, but they include, for example, women with jewelry and expensive clothes (1 Tim 2:9); slave owners (1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10),

30 Philodemus, Oec. A.2-5; 10.28-34, referring to ps.-Aristotle, Oec. 1.6.1-8 (1344B-1345B).
women with leisure time (1 Tim 5:13; 2 Tim 3:6-7), independent women who have resources to support widows without burdening the church (1 Tim 5:16), and men who are “rich in the present age” (1 Tim 6:17-19) or who “want to be rich” (1 Tim 6:9). On the other hand, his community also includes people for whom Philodemus’s advice would be irrelevant—indigent widows (1 Tim 5:3-14), and slaves (1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10).

Pastoral Paul would find agreeable Philodemus’s perspective on legitimate sources of income for “God’s household manager.” We do not find in the PE the explicit commendation of manual labor found in some other Pauline letters (cf. 1 Thess 2:9; 4:11; 2 Thess 3:7-12). The only paid employment mentioned in the PE is “labor in word and teaching” (1 Tim 5:17; cf. 1 Cor 9:3-18; 2 Cor 11:7-11). Similarly, Philodemus asserts that the “noblest” (κάλλιστον) source of income is derived from teaching, which he describes not as payment for services but as, “[receiving] back thankful gifts with all reverence in return for philosophical discourses shared with men capable of understanding them, as happened to Epicurus” (23.24-30, trans., Tsouna).31

One major difference between Pastoral Paul and Philodemus is the way they think about “arrangement” (τὸ κοσμήτικόν). Philodemus interprets this only in the mundane sense of organization of implements—a place for everything, and everything in its place.32 So he treats it as an aspect of the use of property (10.44-11.2). Curiously, even though he accepts Theophrastus’s starting point that the household is a foundational element of the πόλις and may be analogous to it, he thinks that point is irrelevant (7.45-8.7), and he fails to draw out the

31 A wise man will “make money (χρηματίζεισθαι) but only from his wisdom, if he should be in poverty” (D.L., Lives 10.120, trans. Hicks, LCL).

32 Cf. Xenophon, Oec. 3.3; 8.1-9.19.
analogy from a well-ordered οἰκία to a well-ordered πόλις to a well-ordered κόσμος. The cosmos, according to Platonists, Aristotelians, and Stoics, is the result of deliberate, orderly arrangement, a divine push-back against chaos. Pastoral Paul exploits this popular understanding when he argues for “orderliness” or “decorum” on the part of Christian women (1 Tim 2:9), overseers (1 Tim 3:2) and slaves (Titus 2:10)—a place for everyone, and everyone in her place (as God ordained). Epicureans, by contrast, thought of the cosmos as resulting from the chance collisions of atoms with no divine design. So Theophrastus’s third skill τὸ κοσμητικόν does not resonate with him at all. He questions whether it is necessary to be married (2.8-10), and he criticizes Theophrastus’s discipline of slaves as inhumane (9.26-10.21).

In columns 12-28, Philodemus offers his own views on household management, often in conversation with Metrodorus’s treatise On Wealth (17.27, 47; 21.34; 22.9; 27.24). Here it


Metrodorus of Lampsacus was the leading disciple of Epicurus (D.L., Lives 10.22-24). Philodemus also wrote a treatise On Wealth, in which he discussed acquisition and preservation more fully (Oec. 12.19-25). Small fragments of the treatises On Wealth by both Metrodorus and Philodemus have been found in the Villa of the Papyri.
becomes clear why Philodemus reacted negatively to any language in Xenophon or Theophrastus that might be construed as reducing household management to accumulation of more and more wealth. Philodemus hews to the basic Epicurean tenet that the highest good is pleasure and that one should seek pleasure and avoid pain.\textsuperscript{36} At one extreme, he rejects the pain of poverty (πενία, 19.15). He critiques the Cynic ideal of mendicancy and the Cynics’ claim of contentment if they have enough to meet their immediate needs for the day (12.25-14.5).\textsuperscript{37} At the other extreme, he rejects the pain of wealth (πλοῦτος, 23.42-24.6), although he thinks wealth is “slightly better” than poverty (27.42-46). Between these two extremes, Philodemus argues for what he calls “measured wealth” (literally, “a measure of wealth,” πλούτου μέτρον, 12.18-19) or “natural wealth” (ὁ φυσικὸς πλοῦτος, 14.19).

In columns 12-17, Philodemus focuses mainly on the acquisition and preservation of property. He says, “the right management of wealth lies in this: in not feeling distressed about what one loses… because of an obsessive [zeal] concerning the more and the less” (14.23-30, trans. Tsouna; cf. 23.40-42). The philosophical household manager does not agonize about maximizing profits or preventing losses. He is not lazy in finding sufficient (ἰκανά, 16.8) resources for himself, but he is “temperate” (σωφρόν, 15.46); “moderate and communal”

\textsuperscript{36} D.L., Lives 10.34, 128, 136.

\textsuperscript{37} Epicurus taught that a sage will not play the Cynic or beg (κυνιεῖν… οὐδὲ πτωχεύσειν, D.L., Lives 10.119). On Philodemus’s polemic against the Cynics, see Asmis, “Epicurean Economics,” who credits Metrodorus as originating that line of argument; and Balch, “Philodemus, ‘On Wealth’ and ‘On Household Management’,,” who examines Philodemus’s anti-Cynic polemic and discusses 1 Tim 6 in light of the Epicurean-Cynic debate. On Stoic, Cynic, and Epicurean views, cf. also Malherbe, “Godliness, Self-Sufficiency, Greed, … Parts 1 & 2.”
(μέτριος τε καὶ κοινός, 16.8) and is always ready to share with his friends (15). He welcomes whatever wealth comes “in a harmless and easy manner” (16.45-46, trans. Tsouna). He is not “devoted to money” (φιλοχρήματος, 17.13). He is not an expert in wealth production but deploys common sense to acquire what is “sufficient for the need” (πρὸς τὴν χρείαν ἄρκοσ, 17.18).

In columns 18-28, Philodemus continues to discuss acquisition and preservation (18.41-42), but now in relation to how the proper use of wealth moderates one’s attitude toward income and expenses. He had already indicated that a good oikonomos is “communal” (κοινός, 16.9). Now he says that, unlike the financial experts, a sage advises people to be “altogether generous” (εἰς τὸ παντὸς μεταδότας, 18.6-7), to cultivate “philanthropy and generosity” (τὸ φιλάνθρωπον... καὶ μεταδοτικόν, 18.34-35). A sage does not worry about losses, as if poverty were the only source of pain (19.10-19). He considers not only the bottom line in the short term but also what is “advantageous” (τὸ σύμφερον, 18.41; 19.41, 45; 20.19, 36, 40; 22.1).

In the long term, it is “advantageous” if one gains money and uses it in ways that are “not shameful but lawful” (μὴ τε αἰσχρῶς ἐννόημα τε, 20.25-26). Following Metrodorus, Philodemus says that acquiring wealth by warfare and using it to wage war are “vainglorious” (δοξοκόπον, 22.24), and attempting to make a living from horsemanship is “quite ridiculous” (23.1-3). Furthermore, he thinks a philosopher should not engage in manual labor—mining with one’s own hands is “madness” and tilling the land is “wretched” (νανικόν, ταλαίπωρον, 23.7). On the other hand, he has few qualms about using slave labor to derive income from mining, and

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38 Cf. “the good producer and preserver,” 18.34; “care and preservation,” 19.34-35; 28.4; “the good moneymaker,” 20.10-16; 21.31, 44.
agriculture with slave labor is “a most dignified income” (εὐσχηµοεστάτον, 23.17). \(^{39}\) It is also “not shameful” to derive income from rents or from the skilled labor of slaves, as long as one does not have slaves do anything “unseemly” (23.18-22). But, “the first and noblest thing is to receive back thankful gifts with all reverence in return for philosophical discourses (λόγοι) shared with men capable of understanding them, as happened to Epicurus” (23.23-30). Here, of course, Philodemus recommends the source of income on which he himself primarily relies, if we take as evidence the epitaph cited above in which he invites his “friend” Piso to dinner and hints that a financial gift would be appropriate.

As for avoiding “shameful” sources of income, Philodemus first puts limits around even that “noblest” profession of philosophical speech making. He discourages making “sophistic and agonistic” speeches, which are the domain of demagogues and sycophants (23.33). I take this to mean that the philosopher should not hire himself out for epideictic oratorical display as telling people what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear (not to mention that they are also showing off), \(^{40}\) and he avoids forensic speeches in court as exercises in spin rather than in philosophical quest for the truth (not to mention that they are also stressful). \(^{41}\) He commends those who use their resources to “study about the truth” (σχολάζουσι περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, 22.34-

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\(^{39}\) On agriculture as the best way to make a living, cf. Xenophon, Oec. 5.1-20; 6.8-10; ps.-Aristotle, Oec. 1.2.2 (1343A).

\(^{40}\) “The wise man will not make fine speeches” (οὐδὲ ρητορεύσειν καλῶς, D.L., Lives 10.118, trans. Hicks, LCL); “He will not compose panegyric” (οὐ πανηγυριεῖν, D.L., Lives 10.120, trans. Hicks, LCL).

\(^{41}\) In his letter to Herodotus, Epicurus said, “nothing suggestive of conflict (διάκρισις) or disquiet (τάραχος) is compatible with an immortal and blessed nature” (D.L., Lives 10.78, trans. Hicks, LCL). On the other hand, Diogenes of Oenoanda said a sage will “feel grief” and “take a suit to court” (D.L., Lives 10.120, trans. Hicks, LCL).
35), whose endeavors promote “tranquility” (ἀταραξία, 22.40). Next, Philodemus advocates acting always according to justice and avoiding injustice (24.11-19). And finally, he goes on at length about the advantage of having many friends and being generous with them (24.20-27.12). This last point sounds more like a discussion of the proper use of wealth than of acquisition and preservation, but Philodemus regards gifts to friends as investments in one’s future, as hedges against possible losses. And he also finds friends useful not only as philosophical conversation partners but also as sources of information and advice.

What would Pastoral Paul make of Philodemus’s advice on household management? First, he would agree with Philodemus’s dictum that one should not waste energy worrying over financial gains and losses. But, whereas Philodemus’s guiding principle is to maximize pleasure and avoid pain in this life, Pastoral Paul embraces a life of suffering and hardship and calls Timothy to the same, because he places all his hope in a better life with Christ in the age to come (2 Tim 1:8, 12; 2:1-13; 3:10-12; 4:6-8).

Second, Pastoral Paul would appreciate Philodemus’s call for moderation, and he would agree that an overseer should be “not devoted to money” (ἀφιλάργυρος, 1 Tim 3:3) and “not given to shameful gain” (μὴ αἰσχροκερδής, Titus 1:7). But he would play up the ethical implications of moderation in terms of temperance and decorum (σώφρον, κόσμιος,1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8) and control of all passions and desires. With regard to an overseer, Pastoral Paul is concerned not with how much money he has but with his ability to control his impulses regarding money, wine, anger, and sex.

Third, Pastoral Paul would appreciate Philodemus’s emphasis on generosity and sharing with friends. But Philodemus’s friends are his affluent peers, who have leisure time for daily philosophical conversation. And his approach to friendship is utilitarian. On the one hand, “gifts”
from “friends” are sometimes euphemisms for the tuition from students who hear his lectures, what Philodemus considers to be the noblest source of income. On the other hand, his own gifts to friends are given with the expectation that, should he suffer financial loss for any reason, his friends can and will supply his needs with reciprocal gifts. At least in this treatise, Philodemus gives no hint that Epicurus’s original garden included slaves and courtesans. In Philodemus’s explicit language it is difficult to see anything more than what we might call a soft utilitarianism. But another treatise from Herculaneum that Philodemus probably also wrote expresses more clearly how the only path to true happiness is through cultivation of virtues, including friendship:

[It is impossible for one to live pleasurably without living prudently and honourably and justly], and also without living courageously and temperately and magnanimously, and without making friends and [without being philanthropic], and in general without having all the other virtues. For the greatest errors in things we choose or avoid occur when some people accomplish individual actions while they hold the opposite view and, because of that, are in the grip of vice.”

42 Philodemus’s utilitarian view of friendship contrasts with the ideas that a sage might sometimes die for a friend (D.L., Lives 10.120) and will love his friend as himself (Cicero, Ends 1.67-8). Tsouna, Ethics of Philodemus, 27-31, considers whether such expressions of altruism could be interpreted egoistically or represent later emerging developments within Epicurean tradition, perhaps led by Philodemus. This reading would shorten the gap between Philodemus and Pastoral Paul.

43 D.L., Lives 10.3, 10, says Epicurus included his slave Mys in his philosophical circle, as well as other house-servants (οἰκέται).

44 Philodemus [?], On Choices and Avoidances 14.1-14, trans., Indelli & Tsouna-Mckirahan, 93, 175-176, as quoted in Tsouna, Ethics of Philodemus, 27. The text is partially reconstructed, but cf. D.L., Lives 10.131-132, for similar sentiments attributed to Epicurus. And for a broader understanding of Epicurean friendship, see A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley, The Hellenistic
Also, Philodemus portrays the traditional expert household manager as friendless because he is unwilling to spend any time or resources cultivating friendships, living a craven life “unphilanthropic and harsh” (ἀφιλανθρωπία... ἀνημερότης, Oec. 24.29-30). But even Philodemus’s most philanthropic statement, above, is ultimately utilitarian in that the primary motivation for virtuous behavior is personal happiness. In any case, his main point about friends in Oec. 13-19 is that the traditional expert manager considers only short-term profits and losses, whereas the philosopher’s generosity to friends is an investment that will pay better in the long term.

Like Epicurus’s “garden,” Pastoral Paul’s community is a metaphorical “household,” in which slaves and masters are “brothers (and sisters)” (1 Tim 6:2). Rather than emphasizing friendship among peers, Pastoral Paul emphasizes that one should give to the indigent who have no ability to repay, simply because they are members of the family, whether the kinship is real (1 Tim 5:4, 8, 16) or metaphorical (1 Tim 5:3, 9-10). Like Philodemus, Pastoral Paul is investing in long-term happiness, but he is thinking about the age to come rather than security in the present life. For Philodemus, the philosophical household manager does not “risk everything” (Oec. 11.18-19), but Pastoral Paul there was no consideration of “risk.” He was willing to be “poured out” as an offering, confident that he would receive a reward “on that day” (2 Tim 4:6-8).

4. Pastoral Paul on “God’s Household Manager.” Pastoral Paul describes the ideal overseer (ἐπίσκοπος, 1 Tim 3:1; Titus 1:7) as “God’s household manager” (θεοῦ οἰκονόμος,

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Titus 1:7). The relevant texts are well known, 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. We shall take these in turn.

As for 1 Tim 3:1-7, Pastoral Paul’s description of an ideal overseer begins with “unimpeachable” (ἀνεπίληπτος) and ends with “having a good reputation among outsiders, that he may not fall into reproach and a snare of the slanderer” (3:1, 7). I take these as roughly synonymous ideas that form an *inclusio* around the list. Pastoral Paul does not list the duties of an overseer but the character traits that will deflect criticism from “outsiders” who might be inclined to “slander” Christianity. After all, from the point of view of Roman society, Christianity was a “new,” and “foreign” religion that was not on any administrator’s list of legally recognized religions.

Pastoral Paul’s list describes the ideal overseer as a person of self-control—“a one-woman man, sober, temperate, a person of decorum, not addicted to wine, not violent, gentle, not combative, not devoted to money, and not a neophyte lest he become puffed up.” Space does not permit a detailed discussion of each item, but we may note three items on that resonate with Philodemus. First, the household manager should be “temperate” (σώφρον). As noted above, Philodemus applies temperance to money, whereas Pastoral Paul applies it more broadly. Epicureans reputedly flouted the sort of conventionalism about sexual ethics that Pastoral Paul upholds, though Diogenes Laërtius dismissed all that as baseless slander.⁴⁶ What Epicurus actually taught was that with regard to women a sage never breaks the law and is not overcome

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by erotic desire. He wrote that real pleasure is found not in indulgence of appetites for wine, sexual pleasures, and gourmet feasts but in the exercise of “sober reason” (νήφως λογισμός), which sounds very much like Pastoral Paul. So Philodemus and Pastoral Paul would agree on the idea of temperance as a rule for life.

Second, “not violent but gentle, not combative” (μὴ πλήκττν, ἄλλα ἐπιηκή, ἅμαχον” (3:3; cf. 2 Tim 2:24; Titus 1:7) resonates with Philodemus’s rejection of both warfare and “agonistic” oratory as a means of income and also with his general emphasis on tranquility. Third, while Philodemus does not use the specific word ἄφιλάργυρος, he strongly objects to any form of greed or striving to maximize profits. In general, we should expect Philodemus to agree with Pastoral Paul on matters of self-control.

Pastoral Paul also describes the ideal overseer as one who “presides well over (κολός προστάμενον) his own house,” which he glosses with the phrase, “having children in subjection.” The gloss on children suggests how Pastoral Paul views the analogy between a head of household and an overseer who “cares for God’s church.” He plays up the connotation of parent rather than ruler, as Theophrastus would have it, or business manager, as Philodemus emphasizes. The householder/overseer is a person of decorum himself, who maintains decorum

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47 D.L., Lives 10.113. Epicurus also advised a sage not to marry or have children (D.L., Lives 10.114), but his disciple Metrodorus was married, and in his will Epicurus provided for Metrodorus’s children (D.L., Lives 10.21).
49 The synonym φιλοχρήματος appears in Oec. 11.3; 17.13.
50 “Household management is monarchy (μοναρχία),” ps.-Aristotle, Oec. 1.1 (1343A).
51 “The good household manager is a provider of possessions and money,” Philodemus, Oec. 3a.7-9.
in his household/church. A place for everyone and everyone in their place. But the verb “care for” (ἐπιμέλεσθαι) suggests more than strict discipline. A father should be sure his children are flourishing. Recall Philodemus’s argument that managing a household “happily” (μακαρίως) entails “to teach another more delightful things that he would not have found even if he sought them” (Philodemus, Oec. 3a.14-16). So I would include “apt to teach” within the purview of Pastoral Paul’s good father. Finally, I would include “hospitable” (φιλόξενος) as characteristic of a good household manager, though I think Pastoral Paul would apply it more broadly than Philodemus’s dinners for his well healed philosopher friends.

As for Titus 1:5-9, after describing “God’s household manager,” Pastoral Paul describes bad teachers (Titus 1:10-16). We should read the whole chapter to get his full sense of what a Christian leader should and should not be. The desirable qualities are similar to those listed in 1 Tim 3:1-7. First, God’s household manager must be “blameless” (1:6, 7) in order to be credible in refuting opponents (1:9), whether those opponents are Christians (1:10-11) or outsiders (2:5, 7).  

52 Philodemus does not comment on it, but a major theme in Xenophon, Oec. is the duty of the householder to teach skills, duties and ethical principles of life to his wife (Oec. 3.11; 7.4-9.19) and his foreman (Oec. 12.9-14.10).  

53 Even if Epicurus included slaves in his philosophical circle, we should not assume that Epicureans were egalitarian. Philodemus, Oec. 9.17-19, accepts Theophrastus’ distinction (ps.-Aristotle, Oec. 1.5 [1344A]) between two types of slave, the one trusted with responsibility (ἐπίτροπος) and the laborer (ἐργάτης). Presumably only a well educated ἐπίτροπος might possibly be included in the group.  

54 Scholars debate whether “elders” and “overseer” in this passage are two different offices or interchangeable terms for the same office. For purposes of this paper, I shall read all of 1:5-9 as describing an ideal Christian leader, regardless of title.
8, 10; cf. 1 Tim 3:7; 5:14; 6:1). Second, as in 1 Tim 3, the overriding concern is self-control (1:8), which is expressed in multiple ways—“husband of one wife, … not susceptible to a charge of dissolution or insubordination… not impudent, not irascible, not a drunkard, not violent, not after shameful gain, … temperate, just, self-controlled” (1:6-8). Third, this list does not use the word “person of decorum” (κόσμιος), but it does describe the ideal “household manager” as properly observant of his various relationships to society, God, and family—“…having faithful children, not susceptible to a charge of… insubordination… hospitable, devoted to good, just, religious” (1:6-8). Even more than in 1 Tim 3, Pastoral Paul here plays up the teaching and correction function of the household manager (1:9, 13).

Self-control and decorum are not the peculiar domain of the household manager. Pastoral Paul expects all members of God’s “household” to exhibit similar orderliness and self-control (2:2-10; 3:1-3). This ethic grounded in the epiphany of God (in the incarnate Jesus), who came, “teaching us that, denying impiety and worldly lusts, we should live temperately and justly and piously in the present age” (2:12), and who gave an example of self-sacrifice for the good of others (2:14). It is also grounded in the anticipated epiphany of God (the parousia of Christ, 2:14; 3:4-7) that orients believers’ lives toward a “hope of eternal life” (3:7).

Bad teachers display all the opposite characteristics of God’s household manager. They are “worthless-talkers and deceivers” (1:10), because their thinking is messed up—“paying attention to Jewish myths and human commandments, turning away from the truth, … soiled in mind and conscience” (1:14-15). They do not promote decorum—“insubordinate… upsetting whole households” (1:10-11). And they lack self-control—“teaching for the sake of shameful gain” (1:11); they are the proverbial “liars, evil beasts, and lazy bellies” (1:12). The result is complete lack of integrity, as their actions are not consistent with their words (1:16).
When we compare Titus 1 with Philodemus, *Oec.*, we see once again that Pastoral Paul puts more emphasis on the teaching role of the household manager. Philodemus would agree with Pastoral Paul’s inclusion of “justice” in this letter (Titus 1:8; 2:12), since he thought a household manager should act according to justice and avoid injustice (24.11-19). Again, he would agree that self-control is important, though he might choose different examples. For instance, he would agree that some sources of income are “shameful;” but since he regarded “gifts” for philosophy lectures as the “noblest” income, he would want to know exactly what kind of teaching Pastoral Paul thought was a source of “shameful gain.” And finally, Philodemus would reject out of hand the cross of Jesus as any sort of paradigm for behavior.

5. *Conclusion.* Malherbe argued that Pastoral Paul’s advice about wealth in 1 Timothy 6 reflects broad themes, even clichés, and cannot be tied closely to any specific philosophical school. Balch has argued that Americans are generally more comfortable with the Epicureans who practice relative moderation while living in nice houses, as opposed to the Cynics who lived as homeless, wandering mendicants. And he points out that Jesus blessed the mendicants (πτωχοί) and lived as a mendicant himself. Can Americans, then, look to Pastoral Paul for protection against Jesus’ call to sell everything and give to the poor? The comparison between Pastoral Paul and Philodemus is instructive.

Philodemus is an Epicurean philosopher writing for Epicurean philosophers to tell them how to manage their own households. Pastoral Paul is a Christian minister writing to Christian

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55 Malherbe, “Godliness, Self-Sufficiency, Greed,… Parts 1 & 2.”
ministers to tell them how to manage the metaphorical “household of God.” They would agree that a “happy” household had more going for it than money.

They would also agree that a good household manager should lead a life of virtue and seek to cultivate virtue in members of the household, although Pastoral Paul places more emphasis on these points. Philodemus might quibble about details, but he would agree with Pastoral Paul’s emphasis on self-control. As to money, both would agree that a sage should be content with what he has and should not be constantly striving for more and more. They would agree that a sage should invest wisely for the long term and not for short-term profits. But instead of Philodemus’s utilitarian view of virtue, Pastoral Paul would likely prefer the more communitarian views of the Stoics.57

But when Philodemus writes how wealth is only “slightly better” than poverty (27.43-45), about baking his own bread and being content with just enough for his daily needs (12.40; 13.42), we should recognize these as hypothetical intellectual conceits. Philodemus lived a comfortable life and partied with well-to-do friends.58 He would certainly reject the story of Jesus’ self-sacrificial death as foundational (1 Tim 2:5-6; Titus 2:14), although he might have been curious to hear more about how Christ “destroyed Death” (2 Tim 1:10). And as for

57 One should give to the poor without expecting anything in return (Cicero, On Duties 2.69-71); one should use all resources for building up one’s family and community (Cicero, On Duties 1.22; 3.63; cf. Plutarch, On Love of Wealth, Morlia 525CD.

embracing a life of self-sacrifice in hopes of some reward in a life after death (2 Tim 4:6-8),
Philodemus would have thought Pastoral Paul was nuts.

Their strongest disagreement would have been with the metaphysics that ground their ethics.
As an Epicurean, Philodemus believed the gods existed but took no interest in human affairs. He
imagined them as living the kind of perfectly happy and tranquil and pain-free life to which he
aspired.\(^{59}\) He would probably have yawned at the idea of the “One God” (1 Tim 2:5) who is the
“blessed and only sovereign, etc.” (1 Tim 6:15-16), although he might have like to hear more
about what made that God “happy” (µακάριος, 1 Tim 6:15). But Philodemus had no frame of
reference for the Jewish apocalyptic distinction between the present age (Titus 2:12) and eternal
life in the age to come (1 Tim 4:8; 6:12, 19; Titus 3:7; 2 Tim 2:11-13).

I imagine Philodemus would have regarded Pastoral Paul’s ideal overseer the way Howard
Hughes regarded Mormons. He had no interest in their religion, but he admired their strict ethics,
so he hired them to manage his affairs.

For his part, if Pastoral Paul encountered Philodemus, he might find in him some ethical
principles he could build on, but he would have wanted to discuss what we mean by short-term
and long-term investments. He would likely want to tell a story about a, “God who created the
universe and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth… he is going to have the world
judged by a man whom… he raised from the dead” (Acts 17:24-31).

\(^{59}\) D.L., Lives 10.121.